

## REMARKS

The Office Action dated October 31, 2007, has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto.

Claims 1-25 are currently pending in the application, of which claims 1, 6, 13, 17, and 22 are independent claims. Claims 1-2, 6-7, 9-10, and 13-16 have been amended, and claims 17-25 have been added, to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention. No new matter has been added. Claims 1-25 are respectfully submitted for consideration.

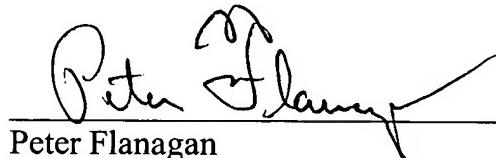
Claims 1-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,717,516 of Bridgelall ("Bridgelall") in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0097250 of Gunzelmann et al. ("Gunzelmann"). Bridgelall was previously cited. Gunzelmann is not proper prior art, because Gunzelmann was filed on the same day as the day to which the present application claims priority, namely November 10, 2003. Gunzelmann includes a claim to an earlier priority date, via its German and PCT applications, but the German application is irrelevant for the purposes of 35 U.S.C. 102(e) (because a foreign filing date does not provide an earlier effective filing date for a reference) and the PCT application is irrelevant for the purposes of 35 U.S.C. 102(e) because it was published in German, rather than English. Accordingly, Gunzelmann is not proper prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), because the same day is not "before" as required by that statutory section. Accordingly, the rejection is improper and must be withdrawn.

Applicants' amendments, therefore, in no way are related to patentability and do not necessitate new grounds of rejection. For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that each of claims 1-25 recites subject matter that is useful, novel, and non-obvious. It is, therefore, respectfully requested that all of claims 1-25 be allowed, and that this application be passed to issuance.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, Applicants' undersigned representative at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosures: Additional Claims Transmittal  
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